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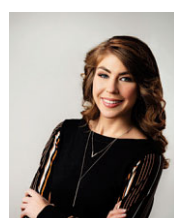
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dards (which go into effect October 1)

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proposed borrowing to improve
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**“The more we know about a culture,
the better off we are in relating
with the people.”**

Reader Andrew Zimmern responds to “5
spots to eat Iranian food in Minneapolis”
at citypages.com.

CATALYTIC DESERTERS

OUR UNDERCARRIAGES ARE under assault:
A recent rash of catalytic converter thefts is
sweeping the Twin Cities. Police say more
than 70 thefts have been reported in St.
Paul over the last month, with dozens more
reports (and Nextdoor posts) from folks
in Minneapolis and St. Louis Park saying
the same. It's the precious metals inside
that make catalytic converters valuable—
relatively speaking—as thieves can scrap
'em for around 100 bucks. (Replacing the
part will cost you anywhere from about
\$500 up to \$2,200.) Cops say to park in
a well-lit area or garage, if you can—or
consider using bolts to keep yours from
disappearing.

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PUP PATROL

Minneapolis charges dog owner with misdemeanor over off-leash permit

On a Saturday morning in October, Mark Palmer of Minneapolis took his dog, Brutus, to the Minnehaha Off-Leash Dog Park.

Palmer was getting ready to leave when a Minneapolis Park Patrol agent approached and asked to see his “off-leash dog permit.”

Palmer thought the agent meant his pet license, which he had in order, but not on him. Once the agent ran his info, Palmer learned these were two very different certifications. He was about to get a citation.

Palmer says the officer crisply told him that they hadn’t written up a ticket like this in “years,” but they’d recently received a complaint from a resident, and Palmer likely wouldn’t be the only one fined that day.

Off-leash permits cost \$35 annually for residents of Minneapolis and \$60 for out-of-towners, with another \$25 (\$35 for non-residents) to add a second dog.

Palmer applied for the off-leash permit right away. But later, he received notice that he was required to appear in court.

He couldn’t believe he was supposed to take off work, accept taxpayer-funded legal help from the city, and appear before a judge to answer for not having the right paperwork to let his dog run around a designated off-leash park. He started making calls.

Palmer says city employees seemed as surprised as he was. They agreed there must be some mistake... until they did some digging. Palmer was indeed due in court, but nobody could tell him why he couldn’t just pay a fine and be done with it.

In a moment of desperation, he went to City Hall, and was eventually put in touch with a city attorney. At first, Palmer says, the attorney assumed something was amiss.

Later that day he called Palmer back, first telling him not to “freak out.” Palmer learned his violation was a misdemeanor,

punishable by up to 90 days in jail and up to a \$1,000 fine.

The attorney was able to help him negotiate his offense down to a petty misdemeanor, which wouldn’t require a hearing and lowered his fine to \$178. But Palmer was livid, and took his case to Facebook.

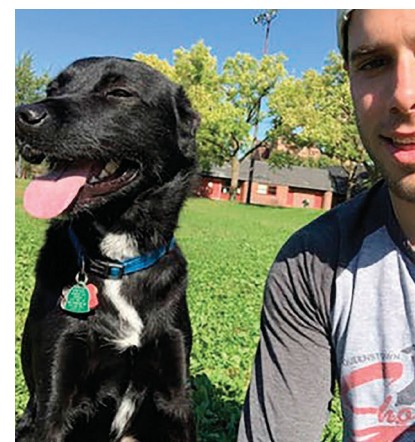
“I question the law itself, but I denounce the legal process attached to it,” he wrote.

The reasons any of this happened are a little nebulous. A spokesperson for the city confirmed the bit of municipal code that governs Palmer’s offense, and that violating it requires an appearance in court.

Dawn Sommers, a spokesperson for the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board, says although that agency enforces the ordinance, it’s more under the purview of animal control. Meanwhile, Caroline Hairfield, director of Minneapolis Animal Care & Control, said in a statement that it was under the jurisdiction of the Park Board.

Neither could say why Palmer’s offense rose to the level of a misdemeanor, though both explained why such ordinances exist.

Sommers says it’s important to have dogs vaccinated against rabies before they’re allowed to interact without leashes. (Palmer says he has Brutus up to date on all his shots, and the dog tags to prove it.) Hairfield said



MARK PALMER

that they exist to help offset the cost of caring for and maintaining the city’s seven off-leash dog parks.

Palmer thinks he’s actually lucky. Other people issued a citation that day may not have had the time or the resources to leverage a better outcome.

“Please use our taxpayer dollars for more pressing matters, such as violent crimes, education, and homeless citizens,” he wrote on Facebook, “Not dragging dog park-goers through a multi-month legal process that will help NO ONE.”—HANNAH JONES

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HOT DOG!

A quest for beauty in the wiener wasteland

BY BILL LINDEKE

Spoiler alert: The Twin Cities is not really a hot dog town. Our neighborhoods aren't built around dusty corner diners where wieners go back generations. We don't argue at the drop of a hat about brands of mustard or pickle taxonomy. (And, no, parsing the relative virtues of Pronto Pups versus corn dogs for two weeks each year doesn't count.)

The nuances of a great hot dog are lost on Twin Citizens, who couldn't pick out a poppy seed bun from a bakery lineup, let alone

explain the difference between a chili and a Coney sauce. For the most part, the Minnesota hot dog is regarded as a lowly and overlooked craft. Even the measly French fry gets more culinary scrutiny, more listicles and attention, than a good Minneapolis wiener.

It's easy to understand why. Hot dogs are ubiquitous in American culture, the definition of cheap, easy food for everyone from toddlers to retirees. Hot dogs are the epitome of ballpark fare, easy to eat and easy to ignore, and easy to throw at Chuck Knoblauch. Pre-cooked, rolling endlessly at the gas station, for most Minnesotans,



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those glistening pink tubes are nothing but disposable food.

But behind the shimmering facade of cheese-stuffed burgers and brick-oven pizzas lurk wonderful exceptions. Hot dog artisans thrive in the diners and dives, pinball parlors and sushi counters of the Twin Cities' food scene. Even here, in the wiener wasteland, you'll chance across multi-generational sausage slingers, bun stuffers, and Coney connoisseurs.

For a primer, enjoy the following abbreviated tour of the Twin Cities' hot dog scene.

The St. Paul Coney

A great hot dog displays a balance of simplicity and complexity, texture and flavor, and plants its feet firmly on a foundation of excellent ingredients. Particularly in the Midwest, there are two key schools of hot dog craft: the Chicago dog and the Detroit Coney. In their relationship to condiments, these two camps form something of a schism: The Michigan Coney tends toward simplicity, and the Chicago dog toward Dionysian excess.

Luckily you can find excellent versions of both here in the Twin Cities, and it's in St. Paul where a unique tradition of Coney dogs really shines. There are dozens of bars and cafes offering distinctive takes on the Coney in the east metro, and I can safely say I've eaten them all.

The best version can be found at Keenan's, a third-generation brick bar on West Seventh Street. Decades ago,

There are crucial differences between a chili dog and a Coney—often lost on Minnesotans.

owner Bill Keenan adapted a recipe for Coney sauce from the old Green Mill on Grand Avenue, and they've been making them in the small kitchen at the back of the bar ever since.

"Cones are so funny," says DJ Keenan, Bill's son, who runs the menu at Keenan's these days. "Me and my mom, we will bicker about it. We're so picky about every little detail, because it's just four things, but you have to do every step just right."

DJ Keenan worked for years as chef de cuisine at the Kenwood, and brings his fine-dining pedigree to the world of bar food. As he explains it, a great Coney begins with the bun, and Keenan's gets theirs delivered fresh from PJ Murphy's bakery up the street on Randolph Avenue. Crucially, like many St. Paul Coney chefs, Keenan's uses a flat-sided lobster roll

instead of a traditional hot dog bun.

"Sometimes they're so soft you almost can't cut 'em," Keenan says. "It's almost brioche-like, [and] that lobster roll bun is what makes it. Those two flat sides that we then just brush with a bunch of butter and

griddle it just right."

Throw on a flash-fried all-beef wiener, layer with house-made Coney sauce and a touch of mustard, and top it all with cheese to melt in the oven. Then sprinkle with freshly diced onion. Voila! you have the perfect St. Paul Coney—a balanced mix of savory and sweet that melts in your mouth.

Hot dog
artisans thrive
in the diners
and dives of the
Twin Cities.



COURTESY OF UNCLE FRANKY'S

"It's nice to bring all those techniques and everything you learn at a place like [the Kenwood] into a small place here. It's just the tiny little things you do," explained Keenan, who has added a bunch of well-crafted bar food to the menu over the past year.

The Expatriate Chicago Dog

On the other end of the spectrum, the Chicago dog seems, at first, an excessive mess. With full-size pickles, tomatoes, neon-green relish, and peppers all fighting for space, they simply can't be eaten without falling apart. But it doesn't take long to realize that a great Chicago dog balances fat, salt, and heat with the best of them, and the flavor lingers in your head like a pop refrain long after you've finished. Far from excessive, a Chicago dog represents generations of Windy City palates.

There's no better Minnesota spot to indulge in Chicago perfection than Uncle Franky's. This small diner with catsup-and-mustard walls on Northeast Broadway has been home to Minneapolis' most authentic hot dogs since 2001, with a menu that spans the spectrum from Coneys to Polish sausages to hot Italian beef. As blues play out of a boom box on the back wall, and the waitress calls you sweetheart and the cook calls you sir, it's the perfect place to taste the spirit of Chicago.

"As any Chicagoan will tell you, this starts with an all-beef hot dog in a natural casing," says Larry Domek of Uncle Franky's.

"As any Chicagoan will tell you, this starts with an all-beef hot dog in a natural casing," said Larry Domek, one of the owners. Once he gets going, Domek simply can't stop talking about what makes a great Chicago dog, and if you want to learn about the subtle differences between pickles or varieties of yellow mustard, he's your guy.

"When you're cooking the hot dog, it helps seal in the flavors and the juices, and it has a distinctive snap when you bite into it. Any hot dog vendor worth his salt is gonna serve you an all-beef natural casing hot dog," Domek explained.

Six years ago, Uncle Franky's stopped shipping in their wieners from Chicago. Instead they've hired an undisclosed butcher to craft theirs from an exclusive family recipe refined through years of experimentation. They also have poppy seed buns delivered every other day. Compared to a lot of the old buns you get in the Twin Cities, these are palpably fresh.

"People think a hot dog is a hot dog, but put them side by side, and you'll see a difference," said Domek, who is justifiably dismissive of the cheap wieners in the grocery aisle. "People don't understand the difference. It's in the relish and in the pickle."

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Food and Drug Administration. Because of this, many have found natural CBD products can offer helpful and healthy alternatives to popular over-the-counter NSAIDs.

According to statements from the FDA, including a renewed warning in 2015, NSAID pain relievers carry a risk of heightened blood pressure and heart attacks.

Harvard Medical School reported that one NSAID was responsible for as many as 140,000 cases of heart attacks while on the market.

The most risky uses of NSAIDs come from prolonged use, according to Harvard.

The science behind CBD is new and exciting, but novelty brings its own problems with research. The hemp plant has long been prohibited in the U.S. and scientists have rushed to learn more since federal hemp legalization in 2018.

In the summer of 2019, the World Health Organization published findings that CBD use carries no major health risks.

The National Institutes of Health have published multiple studies about the potential uses and benefits of CBD, including as a treatment for chronic and hard-to-treat pain as well as for inflammation. Both of these are common reasons people turn to NSAIDs.

Still, finding the right CBD products can be difficult, and a flooded market of new businesses and retailers has confused many as the news of hemp's utility has spread.

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LUCY HAWTHORNE

To make a classic Chicago dog, you'll need a steamed poppy seed bun, an all-beef frankfurter, a hint of mustard, distinctively sweet neon green relish, Roma tomatoes, a Chicago Pickle Company pickle, sport peppers—which are not jalapenos, but a special hybrid serrano pepper—and finally a few onions topped with secret seasoning.

(If you ask Larry he'll tell you, with a wink, their "secret seasoning" is just celery salt.)

"The pickle slice on one side, three tomato slices on the other, bright-green neon relish, and sprinkle a few onions on top, and finally you add the special secret seasoning," explains Domek, who grew up on the north side eating Chicago dogs and Italian beef sandwiches.

Watching Lonnie, one of the Uncle Franky's chefs, cooking dogs on the grill is a treat enjoyed by anyone who stops into the joint. The subtle flicks of the wrist and the ease of everything make you realize that, like any art, hot dogs adhere to the "10,000 hour rule." Once you make a few thousand Chicago dogs,

Kyatchi's baseball theme pretty much required that it serve hot dogs.

you develop a seamless feel for the subtlety of the craft; those tiny differences between ingredients where condiments become second nature.

The Japanese Twist

From its very beginnings on Coney Island, the American hot dog has been a cultural mashup. As American culture has transcended borders, the classic hot dog evolved into an international delicacy. You can find lots of examples scattered on menus throughout the metro area—notably the bacon-wrapped "hot dogs," aka Mexican street dogs, at Hamburguesas el Gordo in south Minneapolis.

For me, the most impressive local wiener mashup sits on the bottom of the menu at Kyatchi, the Japanese restaurant on Nicollet Avenue in Minneapolis, and at its newer Lowertown St.



RENEE JONES SCHNEIDER

Paul location. That's where executive chef Hide Tozawa and his team create subtle hot dog masterpieces that arrive plated like artwork alongside creamy Japanese potato salad.

"This restaurant has a baseball theme, so we wanted to have some sort of stadium food, which is hot dogs," explained Tozawa, who grew up in Japan rooting for the Hanshin Tigers of the NPB. "But we decided to put like a Japanese twist on it."

Kyatchi typically has four choices on the menu, and they change from month to month as Tozawa gives his cooks a challenge: design a delicious hot dog following specific rules that bring out the complex tensions inherent in a frankfurter.

"When I let the cooks create some new hot dogs, I give them rules: You can only use up to three ingredients, and you can't double up the protein, because it feels unhealthy," Tozawa says.

As a result, Kyatchi's hot dogs are never lathered with bacon or ground beef, and instead display a variety and elegance usually reserved for sushi rolls. They use oversized buns from French Meadow Bakery that offer an ample canvas for elaborate toppings like soba noodles, egg salad, avocado, or shishito peppers.

I loved the Yakisoba dog (their most popular), where savory flavor oozed from soba noodles surrounding a crisped Limousin beef wiener from Peterson's, a butcher out by Osceola. On the other hand, the avocado and egg dog had a wildly different flavor and texture, where the sausage was almost lost in the creaminess.

Pinball forms the background for Tilt's creative hot dog menu.

"It looks so simple, but if you keep making it you realize it's so hard to change it every week," admitted Tozawa, who curates the menus at both Kyatchi locations.

The Ever-Changing Dog Menu

If you want to throw the rules out the window, the metro's wildest display of hot dog creativity is in Tilt Pinball bar in Minneapolis' Whittier neighborhood. Here, wiener ideas erupt from the back kitchen like mustard from a squeeze bottle.

There are a dozen different dogs on the ever-changing menu, and bellying up to the bar at the back of the dark, deafening room, one can easily get lost in the flavor combinations.

"The pinball concept came first," says Carrie McCabe-Johnston, who co-owns Tilt (along with Nightingale, Dusty's, and Mortimer's, which together form a bar-food empire down the spine of Minneapolis). "Hot dogs seem to fit the bill in terms of ease

and accessibility. And they're a blank canvas. For the consumer, it's a really easy thing to grab and eat. But you're there focusing on the game."

I should point out that Tilt is also crammed full of pinball machines, flashing and blinking in the dim light like an alien invasion. The sounds of

Once you make a few thousand Chicago dogs, you develop a feel for the craft.



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BRIDGET BENNETT

a thousand bleeps and bells, and the constant mechanical slapping of pinball paddles as a dozen folks of all ages and backgrounds try to keep the balls alive, form the background for the creativity of the hot dog menu, where McCabe-Johnston and chef Ben Westerberg keep gamers guessing about what's coming down the pipe.

"There are the hot dog classics, but it's mostly inspiration, coming up with dishes and daydreaming on things," said McCabe-Johnston.

Not only is the hot dog menu gigantic, adventurous, and (with the build-your-own feature) customizable, but it's often in a state of flux. Last October, there was a rotating hot dog special based on famous monsters, and November featured hot dogs inspired by soups. (Picture the beer cheese soup dog or the veggie curry dog.)

Personally, I was not that into the Boss Lady, a dog topped with kraut, caraway mustard, and beacon mushrooms; the vinegar sweetness of the mushrooms and kraut overwhelmed everything else on the bun. My favorite was the OGB (stands for onion, gruyere, and bacon), which, between the melted cheese and the crunchy bacon bits, nailed a balance of texture and flavor.

"It's been working well," McCabe-Johnston told me. "People have found their favorites and keep coming back. It's far from being too high-end. It's a hot dog. [I] never wanted to use the term 'gourmet' with it; we're not reinventing the wheel

Above is one example from the Wienery, the West Bank's venerable hot dog counter.

or doing anything extraordinary. Just making delicious food."

New Dog City

Sure, the Twin Cities are not proper hot dog cities, where hot dogs have taken on a mythological quality and people make pilgrimages to wiener meccas like Gray's Papaya in New York, Lafayette Coney in Detroit, or the Wiener's Circle in Chicago. Here, the hot dog will likely always take a backseat to the Juicy Lucy. Maybe even the cream cheese wonton.

But the hot dog underground remains, where people have mastered the subtleties of the grill and keep their buns fresh. You can find it at stalwart diners like the Wienery on Cedar Avenue, Chicago Taste Authority on East 42nd Street, and Cecil's Deli in St. Paul's Highland Park—

joints that have kept traditions alive for decades. Our lack of vernacular staples might be a blessing in disguise, because hot dog chefs aren't wedded to stifling tradition.

We've got permission to experiment with new ideas, to toss some tater tots or kimchi in there and see if it sticks. Do it right, balance the simplicity and complexity of the perfect hot dog, and the Twin Cities might take its place in the pantheon of hot dog geography. Here's hoping. 

Wiener ideas erupt from the back kitchen like mustard from a squeeze bottle.



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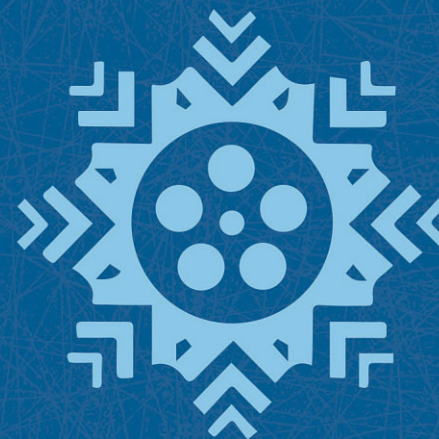
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BY TONY LIBERA

You've probably heard a lot about Iran these past few weeks, and you'll likely hear more as Trump and his goons do their little dance with the Iranian government and *their* goons.

In these difficult times, it's important that we non-goons—American and Iranian alike—keep each other in our thoughts and remember, as Charlie Chaplin put it, “We want to live by each other's happiness, not by each other's misery.”

What better way to do that than through kickass food? To that end, here's a list of spots where you can grab Iranian grub in the Twin Cities.

Caspian Bistro

As the son of a Persian immigrant, I've been going to Caspian Bistro regularly since I was but a sweet baby boy. I'm admittedly biased, but I firmly believe that if you go once, you'll be hooked. My personal favorite is the Chelo Kabob Koobideh—the national dish of Iran. It's ground lamb and beef mixed together with onion and some super secret Iranian spices that make KFC's Original Recipe taste like dog food—and not the fancy kind my dog eats, either. Caspian throws two skewers of meat next to some saffroned Basmati and you load it up with sumac (not the poison kind). Welcome to koobideh town, baby!

Other musts in my book are the Mast O Khiyar (essentially tzatziki with some added fixin's), the Chelo Koobideh (two skewers of chicken breast instead of lamb/beef), and the Tahdig—scorched rice. Trust me, it's better that it sounds. I call 'em “crunchies.” *Caspian Bistro, 2418 University Ave. SE*

Holy Land

What's not to love about Holy Land? They've got a wonderful restaurant experience, a huge menu, and—oh yeah—an effing hummus factory. Although owner Wajdi Wadi originally hails from Kuwait, it's clear the Holy Land family appreciates Iranian fare. Why's that? They make a few of the best Persian meals you'll have in the States. Go for the Persian Combo—one skewer of lamb/beef and one of chicken. I'm a Caspian homer for life, but I have to admit that Holy Land's meat game is out of control. *Holy Land Deli, 2513 Central Ave. NE*

Olive & Lamb

Olive & Lamb doesn't explicitly call itself an Iranian restaurant, and even labels its

Welcome to koobideh town, baby!



GETTY IMAGES

Chelo Kabob Koobideh as simply “Beef & Lamb Kabob.” There are Greek items on the menu, too, but if there's sumac on the table, I'm calling it an Iranian restaurant.

What's cool about Olive & Lamb is you can build your own bowls, but with better quality than at a fast-casual chain. Given the extra-Persian influence, I can mix my Iranian meat with some delicious Greek sauces for a blissful culinary experience that's pretty sexual when you think about it. *Olive & Lamb, 2424 University Ave. NE*

Atlas Grill

If you've ever walked past U.S. Bank Plaza's Atlas Grill during a work day, you might be surprised to know it's an Iranian joint. It definitely looks a bit more highbrow than Caspian or Olive & Lamb, and the Caesar salad and sautéed walleye don't scream Persian cuisine. And yet, they've got koobideh and another super popular dish, Ghormeh Sabzi. It's an herb stew with braised beef so warm, tender, and delicious it'll be your new go-to when the temperature drops below zero. *Atlas Grill, 200 S. Sixth St.*

COMMON TABLE

5 spots to eat Iranian food in Minneapolis

moved to India to avoid Muslim persecution. Plus, Queen is just good cooking music.

- Put your meat in a big bowl, you freak. Now wash your hands.
- Mince your garlic cloves and chop up that onion 'til it's fine as hell.
- Throw both in the meat bowl along with the salt, sumac, pepper, etc. Save the butter, though.
- Crack the egg in there.
- Knead everything for the entirety of “Bohemian Rhapsody” or longer if it isn't sticking together yet.

Now, this is where I get a little wacky, my friends. Chances are you're not grilling in January in Minnesota, and you might not have kabob skewers handy. So to the oven we go.

- Preheat the broiler.
- Form the meat into kabobs with your hands. Melt the butter and baste each side of the meat with a brush. Put the kabobs on a broiling pan.
- Start making rice. If you don't know how to make rice... read the bag.
- Put meat in the broiler. Broil each side for 5-8 minutes depending on how terrible your oven is. Internal meat temperature should hit 145°F.
- Grind a couple pinches of saffron in a mortar. Add a tablespoon of hot water and mix. Let it sit. When the rice is done, mix in the saffron and some butter.
- Take out the kabobs and put everything on a plate. Sprinkle sumac on the rice and meat. Use a fork to put the food into your face and then move your mouth up and down to chew. Swallow the food and enjoy. I repeat: Welcome to koobideh town.

A note on spelling: Since Farsi and Arabic don't use the Roman alphabet, a dish's spelling varies depending on the establishment; for example, Caspian, Atlas, and Holy Land each spell “Chelo Kabob Koobideh” differently, though it appears uniformly above for consistency.

Your House?!?

The best part about Iranian food, besides the flavors, is its simplicity. If a dummy like me can pull off Persian cooking, so can you! So here's my recipe for killer chelo kabob koobideh at home.

- 1 1/4 lb ground beef
- 3/4 lb ground lamb
- 2 yellow onions
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp garlic salt
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 1/2 tsp lime juice
- 1/4 cup butter (or olive oil)
- 1 tsp sumac
- 1 tsp turmeric
- A smidgen of baking soda
- one egg
- two garlic cloves (or more)
- Basmati rice
- A couple saffron threads

You don't *need* the sumac, turmeric, or saffron if you don't have it—but you'll lose a little Persian magic.

- Turn on a Queen song. Freddie Mercury was Parsi, a descendant of Persians who

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01

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JAN
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08

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14

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MAR
01

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04

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MAR
08

**WELCOME TO
NIGHT VALE**

MAR
23

GARY GULMAN

MAR
27

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JAN 22

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JAN 16

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JAN 20

THE 69 EYES
W/ WEDNESDAY 13, SUMO CYCO,
THE CROWNED

JAN 30

EMO NITE

JAN 31

TURKUAZ
W/ NEAL FRANCIS

FEB 01

**DENIM MATRIARCH,
FLIP RUSHMORE,
VIAL, AND pure SHIFTER**

JAN 17

**PARTITION
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W/ HARPER'S JAR, GRAMMA, IN LIEU

JAN 21

TURF CLUB

**MRS. PINKY AND THE
GREAT FOX AND VIBE CORP**
W/ GHOSTY, SOCIAL NOUS

JAN 16

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W/ DJ FoolProof

JAN 18

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BLOSSOMS**
W/ HEMMA

JAN 20

MODERN NATURE
W/ OLDEN YOLK

JAN 18

GREAT GOOD FINE OK
W/ AARON TAOS

JAN 22

FRUITION
W/ THE MIGHTY PINES

JAN 23

ZEPPU
W/ TABAH

JAN 24

**BEN NOBLE,
CHURCH TRAFFIC,
AND GOOD DICTION**

JAN 25

**RADIO K
GIGAWATT RESIDENCY**
W/ BUILDINGS, IV,
HEALTHY COMPETITION

JAN 19

**THE GET
TOGETHER, LASKA,
AND SAL PARADISE**

JAN 23

AROUND TOWN

MIPSO
W/ BRIDGET KEARNEY &
BENJAMIN LAZAR DAVIS
THE CEDAR CULTURAL CENTER

JAN 26

POPPY
W/ VOWWS
AMSTERDAM BAR & HALL

JAN 30

MAGIC CITY HIPPIES
W/ TIM ATLAS
AMSTERDAM BAR & HALL

FEB 01

THE DOLLOP
W/ DAVE ANTHONY, GARETH REYNOLDS
PANTAGES THEATRE

MAR 07

THEO KATZMAN
W/ RETT MADISON
THE CEDAR CULTURAL CENTER

MAR 07

A LIST

SATURDAY The Art Shanty Projects return to Lake Harriet p. 18

SUNDAY Watch top athletes fly at Bush Lake Ski Jump p. 21

WEDNESDAY 1.15

COMEDY

JOE LARSON

ACME COMEDY CO.

Joe Larson is trying to keep up a healthy work/life balance. To that end, he's on the road only every other week at most. "I do have two small children," he explains. "I can still be around to screw them up enough so that they have something to talk about in therapy when they're older." The kids are also an excellent source of material. "My youngest daughter is four, and she had a playdate recently," he says. "She was playing with her buddy Noel, and Noel has a penis. I know this because he kept pulling it out and talking about it." The boy's mother insisted it was just a phase. "Yeah, no, it's not," Larson replied. On the way home his daughter made an interesting observation. "Can you believe Noel has a penis already?" Larson asked her how she thought someone got one of those. "Well, you have to be old, because you're old and you have one." Larson was stunned. "She looks around her world and thinks, 'My older sister doesn't have one, my mom doesn't even have one, but somehow this Doogie Howser savant has one?'" Larson has filed this information away. "I'm never going to tell her any different," he insists. "I'm going to use it against her. 'You better get those grades up or we're never giving you a penis!'" 18+. 8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday; 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$15-\$20. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393. **Through Saturday —P.F. WILSON**

THURSDAY 1.16

PERFORMANCE

THIS BRIDGE CALLED MY ASS

WALKER ART CENTER

Each year, the Walker's Out There series invites groundbreaking performance artists from around the world to give Minnesotans a taste of their work. This week's installment is *This Bridge Called My Ass*. The name pays homage to Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua's *This Bridge Called My Back*, a 1981

"Future Future" at Hair + Nails features artists looking toward tomorrow.



SARAH DWYER

anthology that explores feminism through the perspectives of women of color, bringing us a very useful term: intersectional feminism. For *Ass*, movement artist Miguel Gutierrez explores another intersection: queer and Latinx identities. He does this through abstraction, satire, symbolism, and dry humping. In the first scene, performers both meld into one and shatter, playing with objects like fans, step ladders, and

drapery. Part two dives into an absurdist telenovela, while the third act takes us back to the quest for understanding with a metal dog deity at its center. What does it mean? You'll have to decide for yourself as Gutierrez shares his ass with you for 90 minutes. (Yes, there will be nudity.) 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday; 4 p.m. Saturday. \$26. 725 Vineland Place, Minneapolis; 612-375-7600. **Through Saturday —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

COMEDY

BEN GLEIB

RICK BRONSON'S HOUSE OF COMEDY

Comedian Ben Gleib had an interesting 2019. From May until the end of December, he was running for president of the United States. But this wasn't a Pat Paulson situation (ask your folks); Gleib was serious. He only ended his campaign when he realized he wouldn't be able to get any traction without massive amounts of money. The campaign also kept him from performing on late-night talk shows due to equal-time constraints. His act, though, didn't change all that much. "I definitely do a chunk in every hour on politics," he says, "but it isn't very much." Running for the nation's highest office gave him a unique perspective on America. "I'm anxious to share that with the crowd," he says. "I've had a look at the country that most aren't able to see, and that's influencing my jokes." One big change these days is a reduction in the amount of cussing. "Jay Leno yelled at me about that, so I've been cleaning up my language." 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday; 9:45 p.m. Friday; 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; 9:30 p.m. Saturday. \$16-\$23. 408 E. Broadway, Mall of America, Bloomington; 952-858-8558. **Through Sunday —P.F. WILSON**

FRIDAY 1.17

COMEDY

CHRIS FLEMING

THE CEDAR CULTURAL CENTER

Chris Fleming channels his social anxieties into wonderfully awkward comedy, recognizing the wealth of folly to be found in misconstrued cues and neuroses. He is perhaps best known for *Gayle*, a 41-episode web series in which he played Gayle Waters-Waters, a status-obsessed suburban mother. The show allowed him free reign to lambast the more ridiculous aspects of that life, such as exhibiting a manic commitment to physical fitness and the art of exchanging superficial pleasantries with passive-aggressive neighbors. Whereas *Gayle* is an

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18 ►

FRIDAY

PERFORMANCE
PUPPET LABOPEN EYE
FIGURE THEATRE

Puppet Lab has returned, this time in a new home. The emerging arts incubator program, organized by Alison Heimstead, was formerly housed at In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre. Now Heimstead brings the innovative project to Open Eye

Figure Theatre. This week, artists Eva Adderley and Oanh Vu will share their work. Adderley's piece, *The Deer Child*, tells the story of a young animal lover who befriends a magical deer. Vu's *Phantom Loss* uses tabletop and shadow puppetry to explore grief and intergenerational trauma through the eyes of a young girl who is trying to communicate with her ancestors. Discover all the places puppetry can take you at this boundary-pushing festival. 13+. 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 2:30 p.m. Sunday. \$15. 506 E. 24th St., Minneapolis; 612-874-6338. **Through Sunday —SHEILA REGAN**

Oanh Vu



Eva Adderley



BRUCE SILCOX

CONTINUED FROM FRIDAY ►

over-the-top caricature of suburban dementia, Fleming's standup persona is relatively grounded. Onstage, he is more inclined to share personal accounts of irrationality, riffing on his perceived inadequacies and self-esteem. Fleming's latest set at the Cedar should include reflective musings, social commentary, and musical interludes, all united by a delightful sense of absurdity. All ages. 7 p.m. \$40. 416 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-338-2674. —BRAD RICHASON

THEATER

A DOLL'S HOUSE, PART 2

JUNGLE THEATER

Did *A Doll's House*, the 1879 proto-feminist classic by Henrik Ibsen, need a sequel? Apparently so, as this season Lucas Hnath's 2017 *Part 2* is tied with *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* as the most produced play in America. Its Twin Cities debut will be helmed at the Jungle Theater by director Joanie Schultz, starring Christina Baldwin in her second consecutive season taking the Jungle stage as a badass 19th-century mom (last year she was Marmee in *Little Women*). The original play ends—spoiler alert—with Nora, a wife and mother, leaving her family to live an independent life. What did that life entail? Audiences learn the answer in *A Doll's House, Part 2*, which was nominated for a

shelf of Tonys; Laurie Metcalf won for her performance as Nora. The New York Times called *Part 2* “smart, funny, and utterly engrossing,” and this season the Jungle is one of a dozen U.S. companies to co-sign. Baldwin will get to use her skill at comic acting in a play written in contemporary language, exploring a character who captivates 21st-century theatergoers as much as she did 140 years ago. The show is in previews January 15-16. 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays; 2 p.m. Sundays. \$35-\$45. 2951 Lyndale Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-822-7063. **Through February 23 —JAY GABLER**

PERFORMANCE

LOL POLE COMPETITIONS

PARKWAY THEATER

As anyone who has tried to take a casual spin on ye olde stripper pole knows, the amount of sheer strength, power, and hand calluses required to make it look even remotely graceful is humbling. Pole dance as art, sport, and performance will be showcased once again at the LOL (Land of Lakes) Pole Competitions. Folks will square off each evening in a variety of categories, which include novice, classic exotic, sport, and elite artistic, followed by an after-party featuring vendors, meet-and-greet opportunities, and networking. During the day, the festival will offer a variety of workshops and seminars for all levels, whether you just want to try things



The Art Shanties bring all kinds of people to the ice.

SHINE ON PHOTOS

out or you're a seasoned performer looking to level up. Find the complete schedule at poleandperformingart.com. 6 to 9:30 p.m. Friday; 6:15 to 9 p.m. Saturday; 1:45 to 5 p.m. Sunday. \$16-\$45 daily; weekend warrior passes are \$75. 20 Seventh Place W., St. Paul. **Through Sunday —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

BEER

WINTERFEST 2020

U.S. BANK STADIUM

This weekend, the Minnesota Craft Brewers Guild's annual winter event moves to a new venue and a new city while maintaining the same high-class fun featuring bottomless beer samples. Over 100 Minnesota-based breweries will pour tastes in the Polaris Club at U.S. Bank Stadium. Expect a diverse collection of dark wintertime brews, barrel-aged wonders, crisp and tart sours, and hops galore. Keeping up with recent tradition, the event isn't just about the beer, focusing on food pairings and a special menu made to showcase the wide range of flavors on tap. Breweries on hand include Barrel Theory, Modist, Surly, Hoops, Steel Toe, Badger Hill, Utepils, and Disgruntled, among many others. Find tickets and the complete brewery list at mncraftbrew.org. 21+. 7 to 10 p.m. \$80; \$30 designated driver. 900 S. Fifth St., Minneapolis; 612-338-4537. —LOREN GREEN

SATURDAY 1.18

FESTIVAL

ART SHANTY PROJECTS

BDE UNMA/LAKE HARRIET

The Art Shanty Projects bring performers, artists, activists, and community members together for

weekends filled with fun on a frozen lake. This season's artsy ice village returns to Bde Unma/Lake Harriet with a variety of things to see and do. That includes the Flora Sauna, a greenhouse shanty filled with plants; the -7 Degree Entry Danceteria, which spins DJ tunes all day; a shanty featuring a sunlit LiteBrite; a camera obscura shanty on ice; and a five-seater sauna shanty (be sure to make reservations online for that last one). Each weekend also showcases a handful of guests and causes, including a tiny Art Car Parade (think pimped-out remote-controlled toy cars), live plein air painting, and Brownbody, a group that blends modern dance, theater, social justice, and figure skating into one discipline. Find more info at artshantyprompts.org. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. \$10-\$20 suggested donation. 4135 W. Lake Harriet Pkwy., Minneapolis. **Through February 9 —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

ART/GALLERY

FUTURE FUTURE

HAIR + NAILS CONTEMPORARY
ART GALLERY

“Future Future,” Hair + Nails’ biannual group show, parses out the old in favor of the new with vibrancy, abstraction, tones of Cubism, and an almost molecular-level teasing out of materiality. The exhibit features 27 artists working in varied media, hailing from locations across the U.S. Looking for new talent? Here’s your chance to discover something different. Local artists Valerie Oliveira, Drew Peterson, Rachel Collier, and Emmett Ramstad are also on the docket. There will be an opening reception on Saturday,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21 ►



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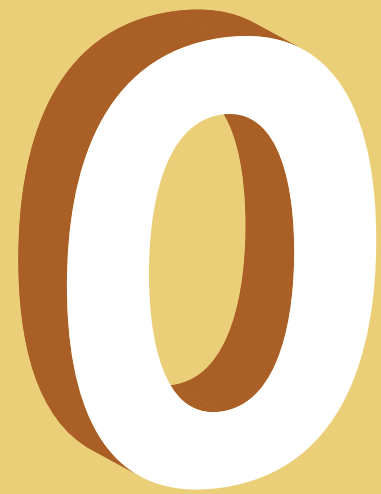
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Full details available online. All programs, artists, dates, times and prices subject to change. PHOTO: Travis Anderson Photo.

A-LIST

A ski jumper catches air before landing.



JERRY HOLT

CONTINUED FROM SATURDAY ►

January 18, from 7 to 10 p.m. 2222 1/2 E. 35th St., Minneapolis. **Through February 23 —CAMILLE LEFEVRE**

THEATER

BERNARDA ALBA

THE RITZ THEATER

The House of Bernarda Alba by Spanish playwright Federico Garcia Lorca might seem like an odd fit for a musical treatment. The tragic tale follows a widowed matriarch whose extreme distrust of the outside world leads her to impose stringent control over her five daughters. But contemporary playwright/composer Michael John LaChiusa found inspiration for melodic longing with his fascinating adaptation, *Bernarda Alba*. Delving into a family where youthful desires have been repressed, LaChiusa found an ideal scenario for characters to express their passion through music and dance. *Bernarda Alba* utilizes propulsive Spanish rhythms to revitalize a work that recalls its cultural background, even as its impact resonates in the here and now. Directed by Crystal Manich, this Twin Cities premiere by Theater Latte Da is further complemented by an all-female cast led by Regina Marie Williams. The show is in previews January 15-17. 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays; 2 p.m. Sundays. \$33-\$53. 345 13th Ave. NE, Minneapolis; 612-339-3003. **Through February 16 —BRAD RICHASON**

SUNDAY 1.19

SPORTS

INTERNATIONAL SKI JUMPING COMPETITION 2020

BUSH LAKE SKI JUMP

It takes a lot of courage to strap on a pair of skis and send yourself down a giant ice slide that's over 20 stories

tall. Yet, somehow, ski jumping exists. See the mind-boggling sport in action this weekend as athletes from Europe, Canada, and the U.S. compete for top honors at the Twin Cities leg of the Midwestern 5 Hills Tour (part of the US Cup Series). This competition is not for the faint of heart, as Olympic hopefuls will be sending themselves down 70-, 25-, and 10-meter ramps, soaring up to 300 feet in the air. Watch it all happen live. Viewing spots include outdoor and indoor locations, and food trucks will be onsite offering all kinds of eats, beer, and hot beverages. 4 to 10 p.m. \$10; kids 12 and under free. 8401 E. Bush Lake Rd., Bloomington; 952-484-8956. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

POETRY

-ING SERIES: JENESSA ANDREA

STUDIO APPARATUS

Jenessa Andrea's new collection, *Pain & Peace*, oscillates between poles. Not just the two mentioned in the title, but growth and regression, memory and imagination, poetry and prose. It's an engrossing journey of work that spills out in fragments, sometimes a single line at a time. It's also a testament to the power of self-love through self-publishing. Studio Apparatus' recurring -ING series will host a multi-faceted celebration of the book's release. Not only will Andrea be reading selections from the engrossing volume of verse, but the poet/designer/musician will also be singing alongside Julian Manzara in an evening that includes an open mic, artwork for sale, and networking opportunities for the creatively inclined. 7 p.m. \$5. 106 W. Water St., St. Paul; 612-822-8080. —JERARD FAGERBERG



Coming to the Twin Cities' hottest new comedy club...

Jan 17, 18 MATT BRAUNGER

with Derek Graff & Grant Winkles

Some of Matt Braunger's TV credits include starring in the Amazon Pilot, The New V.I.P.'s, and a recurring role on ABC's Agent Carter. Matt was a series regular on Fox's MADtv, the Chelsea Lately roundtable, Happy Endings, CONAN, The Late Show with David Letterman, and The Pete Holmes Show.



Jan 24, 25 DANNY BROWNING

with Steve Hartman & Ben Marcotte



Jan 31 and Feb 1 FRANCK ROCHE

with Dave Johnson & Andrew Witzel



Feb 7, 8 NICK HOFF

with Nathan Hults & Matt Dooyema



Feb 14, 15 TODD ANDREW

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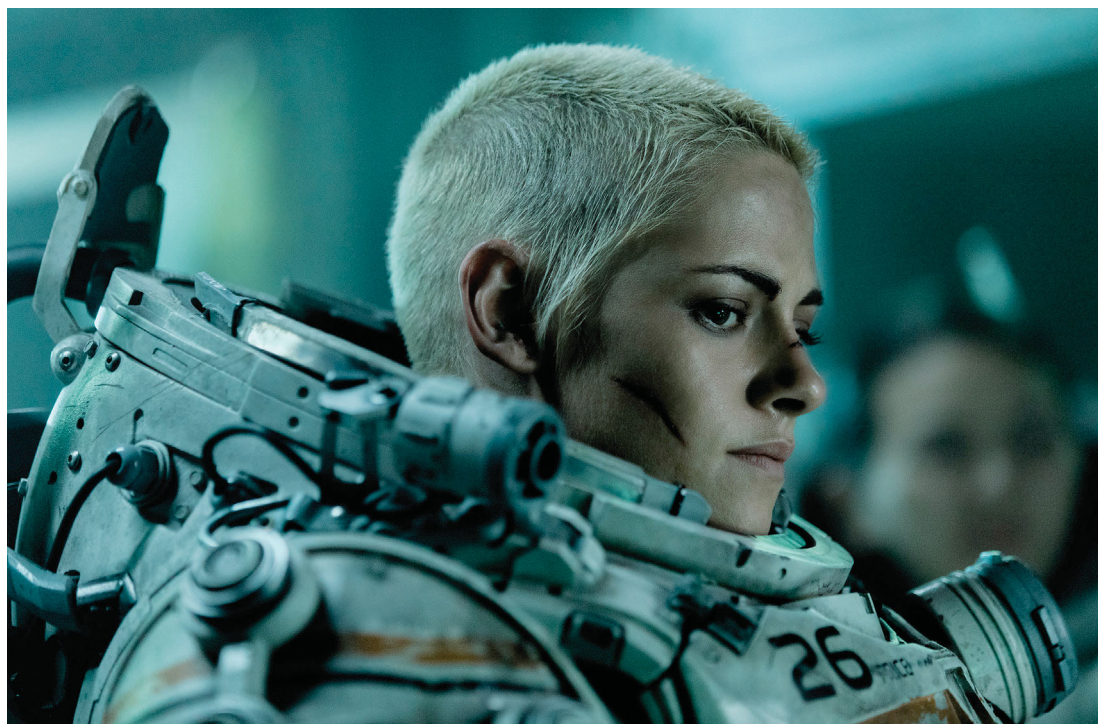


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UNDERWATER, UNDERWHELMING

An *Alien* ripoff so blatant it's impossible to enjoy



ALAN MARKFIELD/20TH CENTURY FOX

BY TONY LIBERA

In *The Sacred Wood*, T.S. Eliot wrote, “Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least different.”

You see the line pop up in the film world quite a bit. It's most often used to praise or justify the hyper-referential styles of people like Quentin Tarantino, your good poets—but if you've ever wondered what the opposite side of that coin looks like, *Underwater* is a trip to the Mint.

The film wastes no time throwing hell at its characters. After a brief locker-room intro to engineer Norah (Kristen Stewart)—who immediately proves her virtue by saving a spider from a sink—her deep-sea drilling rig begins to implode. Norah hauls ass to find a way topside, picking up some buddies from the rubble along the way. But there's something lurking in them there waters, and reaching the surface won't be easy.

What's weird is I didn't hate *Underwater* from the outset. To its credit, there are a couple fun set pieces, Vincent Cassel

is a beaut as always, and the premise—a hobbled crew finding monsters at the bottom of the ocean—has boatloads of potential.

The picture's number-one problem? *Underwater* is basically a deep-sea *Alien* ripoff, something Stuart Heritage of the Guardian called months ago in the only good trailer review ever. And while movies are elevator-pitched as “*Alien*—but underwater” or “*Point Break* meets *Days of Thunder*” all the time, the similarities here are beyond heavy-handed. When the *Alien* realization dawns on you, the entertainment value fades.

Weylan-Yutani-esque evil corporation? Check. Chestbuster-type precursor to the Big Bad? Check. A wannabe Ripley running around in her tiny underwear? Check. The only time *Underwater* deviates from the first *Alien*'s roadmap is when it's pulling from James Cameron or—spoiler alert—H.P. Lovecraft. That's right, *Underwater*'s ultimate reveal is that the merman Xenomorph stand-in that's been picking off the crew one by one is in fact an underling of what's implied to be Cthulhu, the ol' octopus dragon god

UNDERWATER

directed by William Eubank
area theaters, now playing

from Lovecraftian horror yarns... which of course, like Ripley, Norah tries to blow up via self-destruct sequence.

So that brings us back to T.S. Eliot. It's possible *Underwater*'s references could have played as homage were they not so on the nose. Instead, we're inundated with imitation, and none of it's for the better. Maybe with a stronger overall execution we could overlook the blatant yanking; however, there's a lot of fat to be trimmed here, so much standing around, and the movie is only an hour and a half long. Even worse, I'm left wanting for an “*Alien* meets Cthulhu” movie that I never knew I needed. Sadly, *Underwater*'s underperformance will likely table any chance of that happening.

I'm glad Hollywood is starting to explore the ocean depths again after oh so many space movies, but *Underwater* is a subpar offering. Skip the simulacrum and the ticket price and just stream *Alien*, *Aliens*, and *The Abyss* on HBO. **C**

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NEWSLETTERS**

LIGHTS OUT

Black Comedy understands dark art



BOB SUH

BY JAY GABLER

Audiences are reminded before every performance, a 67-year history makes Theatre in the Round the longest-running theater company in Minneapolis. *Black Comedy*, a British one-act by a well-respected playwright, is the sort of show that's long been the company's meat and potatoes. Why change the recipe?

The 1965 farce was penned by Peter Shaffer, who would go on to write *Amadeus* and *Equus*. Its twist is to keep its characters literally in the dark... but only from their perspective. The lighting scheme is inverted: When the fictional room is lit, the audience sees nothing. When the putative power goes out, the stage lights go up so the audience can enjoy watching the actors stumble into the furniture and, more consequentially, into each other.

The story has a classic premise, with a Swinging London flavor that befits its setting. Brindsley (Josh Carson) is a sculptor hoping to achieve two goals in a single night. A wealthy collector (Don Larsson) is coming over to peruse Brindsley's work; if a big sale is forthcoming, Brindsley wants it to happen in front of Colonel Melkett (Don Maloney), who might then be favorably inclined to let his daughter Carol (Kaitlin Klemencic) marry the artist.

Just as the guests are set to arrive, though, a fuse blows and plunges Brindsley's entire building into darkness. Repairs require the services of an electrician (H. William Kirsch), while neighbors Miss Furnival (a deadpan Alison Anderson) and Harold (Matt Saxe) are at loose ends. When Brindsley

BLACK COMEDY

Theatre in the Round
245 Cedar Ave., Minneapolis
612-333-3010; through February 2

gets a phone call from a sexy ex (Kendra Alaura), her inevitable arrival is a development you may, so to speak, see coming.

Shaffer turns Brindsley's apartment into a sort of stage-farce escape room, with pitfalls including a well-stocked bar, fragile artwork, and a trap door. Why doesn't someone just flick a lighter? Someone does, but Brindsley invents a reason to keep the apartment dark while he returns objects borrowed, without permission, from Harold.

Black Comedy is a perfect show for the theater's arena stage, which gives the audience an unobstructed view of the shenanigans unfolding in two or three places at once. Set designer Lee Christiansen even perches Brindsley's bedroom in a raised nook where we can watch fights and flings unfold.

For his lead, director Brian P. Joyce enlisted an actor who's no stranger to barely controlled chaos, having just fought his way through a sellout season of *Die Hard Christmas* at the Bryant-Lake Bowl. Carson's comic timing and kinetic energy serve this production well, though his delivery isn't remotely as dry as his drinks. In a solid ensemble cast, standout Alaura throws herself into the fray with particular abandon.

Before Sunday's matinee, first-time audience members were asked to raise their hands. After the curtain call, one of the newcomers could be seen grinning widely. "What a play!" she said. "I liked it." Another satisfied customer. **C**

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AIDEN JAMES FILM

THE ULTIMATE PERVERSION

How Partition battled through addiction and dysphoria to make *Prodigal Gun*

BY JERARD FAGERBERG

Taylor Nice slinks through the door of Carma Coffee looking like something John Waters might doodle on a napkin.

The Virginia transplant wears a highlighter-pink teddy jacket, their hair done up in two peroxide-blond antennae. Nice downed four cups of coffee before arriving and crests with nervous determination. They've reached a personal apex, and they've got the rhinestones on their eyelids to prove it.

"I had this book of mine from when I was like three years old, and in it I said I wanted to be a rock star," Nice says. "It's something I've always wanted to do, but it's always been a confidence thing. It just felt like maybe I wasn't good enough. But the more I kept doing it, the more I was like, 'This is what I'm supposed to do.'"

When Nice founded Partition in 2014 it was just them and their bass, setting poems

to music in their bedroom. It would take five cities, some luck, and two stints in rehab before those songs came to their full form, but on January 14, Nice finally released Partition's debut LP, *Prodigal Gun*. Next Tuesday, they'll celebrate the half-decade triumph-in-the-making at the 7th St. Entry.

"Through my sobriety and drug addiction, I've just been trying to have this done," Nice says. "It's kinda crazy to actually manifest it."

Nice wears a gilded mare charm on a necklace, and there's a horseshoe tattooed on their left knuckle. These ambivalent homages to their life growing up in Virginia invoke their troubled relationship with their father, a horse trainer. *Prodigal Gun* has nothing good to say about that man, who's renounced outright on "Cowboy Mouth," but he's still an indelible part of who Nice has become.

"My dad is a bad person—an alcoholic, he's abusive to my mom, and just the big-

gest narcissist," Nice says. "I just felt like if I ever did something wrong, it was the part of me that was him."

The relationship poisoned Nice's view of masculinity, as did the experience of growing up trans in a rural town. They knew they wanted to make music, but they thought only boys could play guitar, and they knew they weren't a boy. Nice didn't find the confidence to join a band till a new toxic male figure entered their life: their high school boyfriend.

"I started doing drugs with the boyfriend who most of these songs are about, Partition's original guitar player," they say. "When we broke up, to fill the void, I started doing drugs a lot."

Several lyrics on *Prodigal Gun* address Nice's addiction. On opener "Drugstore Anthem," they bleat, "I am always starving, so take me to the drug store/But I've got no money 'cause I always score." The album's bleakest chapter, "Why Did He Lie?," painfully relives Nice's first overdose.

Drugs became a crutch to help Nice deal with the breakup as well as deeper, unresolved traumas. They were homeless. They did sex work to score. And despite getting A's at Virginia Commonwealth University, they dropped out a semester shy of graduation.

Soon after, Nice contracted a vicious infection from shooting up into their wrist. Their left hand swelled to the size of a baseball mitt and almost had to be amputated. They tried

rehab in Kentucky in 2017, but it didn't stick. Nice found themselves at a crossroads and realized that, if they ever wanted to fulfill the ambition of their three-year-old self, they'd have to be clearheaded and sober.

"It just got to a point where I was either gonna kill myself or try to actually follow my dreams," Nice says. "I've been trying to follow my dreams ever since."

Nice's right thumb traces a cross embossed on a ring on their middle finger. They seem almost nervous to touch it. This is another relic of Nice's past, this one representing their Catholic mother.

Nice's mom was the reason why, in 2018, they gave rehab another shot, in Nashville this time—the single "Get Clean"

repeats the mantra "Get clean for mama, I will." Nice is now sober, happy, and living in north Minneapolis with a functioning band and an audacious wardrobe.

"I used to just hate all the Catholic and cowboy stuff, because it represented everything I wasn't," Nice says. "Now I've embraced it as part of my past, and I'm making it my own."

With Partition, Nice reclaims their past by queering the things that rejected them. The cover art for *Prodigal Gun* is an image Nice conceived of a half-decade ago: the Virgin Mary (portrayed by trans musician Evyn Komstadius) cradling a rifle as if it were Christ.

"My family is Catholic, and then there's rednecks and guns, and I like to queer that," Nice says. "There's so much homophobia in those things, and I want to make the ultimate perversion of what those people hold dear."

Partition is in its fourth or fifth lineup by now, gigging and recording the most professionally fleshed-out music of its fraught existence, thanks in part to Seth Jaques, the first reliable guitarist Nice has ever had. But Partition would never have even made it to this point without drummer Evan Thomas Blasing.

Blasing met Nice through a series of Instagram comments in 2010 when both were 15 years old. They wrote longing posts on Tumblr about each other, separated by 1,500 miles.

"We both liked Nirvana," Blasing remembers. "I showed them Pixies, Modern Lovers, a bunch of cool bands from back then. I knew we always had that, even if we weren't talking so much. I knew that we'd be a good band before it even came together."

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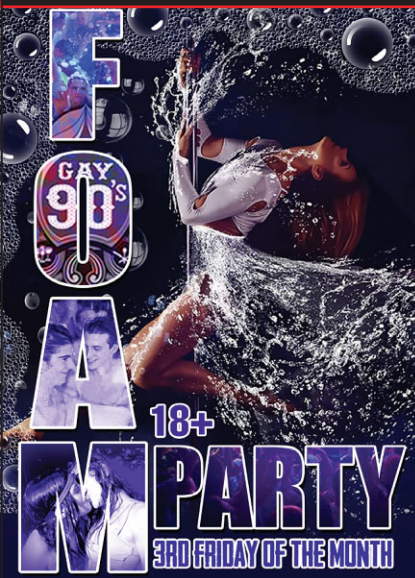
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MUSIC

In 2018, Nice was in a California sober living facility, plotting, along with their current boyfriend, to move Partition out to Detroit. Nice asked Blasing to move with them, and the drummer half-agreed, but the boyfriend's drinking problem interfered with this plan.

Blasing had another idea, and they struck a deal: Nice would buy the flight, he'd pay for the bags, and once settled in Minnesota, Partition would be reborn as a two-piece.

Nice found a job with free housing on a horse farm in Webster; Blasing would drive an hour south to pick them up, bring them to Minneapolis, then drop them back off when they were through. Soon after, Nice and Blasing moved into former DIY space Paper House, where they met Jaques after a gig, and Partition became a trio.

"I remember being 17 and fantasizing about you being my drummer," Nice tells Blasing. "I never thought it would happen. Now, we got a cat."

But don't think this is a happy ending. Nice is more stable and actualized than ever, but there's still a lot of work to do now that the record is pressed. *Prodigal Gun* signs off with "Freudian Slip," a crystalized trauma nightmare that culminates in 12 seconds of banshee screams.

"When I perform, I turn my skin inside out and just cut open my veins," Nice says. "I have to bring myself back to those points. I have to think about this stuff. It's my life, and it's real." **Q**

CRITICS' PICKS

FLIP RUSHMORE, DENIM MATRIARCH, VIAL, PURE SHIFTER

7TH ST. ENTRY, FRIDAY 1.17

Of these four local bands sharing a bill, three specialize in noise abrasion: Denim Matriarch's clanging progressive metal, Vial's frantic pop-punk, and Pure Shifter's fizzy electronic snarl should clear the sinuses and satisfy the aggressive impulses. Flip Rushmore's straight-ahead, folk-tinged rock is warmer, goofier, and twangier—the meat and potatoes of the bunch. 18+. 7:30 p.m. \$10/\$12. 701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. —LUCAS FAGEN

YOUR SMITH

FINE LINE, TUESDAY 1.21

Your Smith's spare, bubbly songs glimmer with sleek pop polish and radiate the warmth of coffeehouse folk. The Minneapolis/Los Angeles singer-songwriter's voice has a mellow, smoky glow. The kiss-offs and the empowerment anthems overlap on her latest EP, last year's *Wild Wild Woman*, featuring "Man of Weakness" and "Wild Wild Woman." With Chelsea Jade. 18+. 7 p.m. \$22/\$25. 318 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. —LUCAS FAGEN



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Sunday, January 26th

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♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19): Comedian John Cleese has an insight I hope you'll consider. He says, "It's easier to do trivial things that are urgent than it is to do important things that are not urgent. It's also easier to do little things we know we can do then to start on big things that we're not so sure about." I hope you'll make this advice a priority in the coming weeks. You'll be wise to prioritize important tasks, even those that aren't urgent, as you de-emphasize trivial matters that tempt you to think they're crucial. Focus on big things that are challenging, rather than on little things that are a snap.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Author Honoré Balzac (1799-1850) was born with sun and Mercury in Taurus and in the 10th house. Astrologers might hypothesize from these placements that he was ambitious, productive, tenacious, diligent, realistic, and willful. The evidence supporting this theory is strong. Balzac wrote over 80 novels that displayed a profound and nuanced understanding of the human comedy. I predict that 2020 will be a year when you could make dramatic progress in cultivating a Balzac-like approach in your own sphere. But here's a caveat: Balzac didn't take good care of his body. He drank far too much coffee and had a careless approach to eating and sleeping. My hope is that as you hone your drive for success, you'll be impeccable in tending to your health.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Before he was 21 years old, William Shakespeare and his wife had had three kids. When he was 25, while the brood was still young, he started churning out literary masterpieces. By the time Will became a grandfather at age 43, he had written many of the works that ultimately made him one of history's most illustrious authors. From this evidence, we might speculate that being a parent and husband heightened his creative flow. I bring this to your attention because I want to ask you: What role will commitment and duty and devotion play in your life during the coming months? (I suspect it'll be a good one.)

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22): Cancerian-born painter Stanley Spencer (1891-1959) didn't align himself with any artistic movement. Early on, his work was an odd blend of French Post-Impressionism and 14th-century Italian painting. I appreciate his stylistic independence, and suggest you draw inspiration from it in 2020. Another unique aspect of Spencer's art was its mix of eroticism and religiosity. I think you'll enjoy exploring that blend yourself in the coming months. Your spiritual and sexual longings could be quite synergistic. There's one part of Spencer's quirky nature I don't recommend you imitate, however. He often wore pajamas beneath his clothes, even to formal occasions. Doing that wouldn't serve your interests. (But it will be healthy for you to be somewhat indifferent to people's opinions.)

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press in the 1440s. In subsequent decades, millions of mass-produced books became available for the first time, making their contents available to a far wider audience than ever before. The printing press caused other changes, too—some not as positive. For instance, people who worked as scribes found it harder to get work. In our era, big culture-wide shifts are impacting our personal lives. Climate change, the internet, smart phones, automation, and human-like robots are just a few examples. What are doing to adjust to the many innovations? And what will you do in the future? Now is an excellent time to meditate on these issues.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You're skilled at the art of self-editing. When bright new ideas well up in you, you understand they are not yet ready for prime time, but will need to be honed and finessed. When your creativity overflows, tantalizing you with fresh perspectives and novel approaches, you know that you'll have to harness the raw surge. However, it's also true that sometimes you go too far in your efforts to refine your imagination's breakthroughs; you over-think and over-polish. But I have a good feeling about the coming weeks, Virgo. I suspect you'll find the sweet spot, self-editing with just the right touch.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Thomas Love Peacock was a Libran author whose specialty was writing satirical novels that featured people sitting around tables arguing about opinions and ideas. He was not renowned for cheerful optimism. And yet he did appreciate sheer beauty. "There is nothing perfect in this world," he said, "except Mozart." So much did Peacock love Mozart's music that during one several-month stretch he attended six performances of the genius's opera *Don Giovanni*. In this spirit, Libra, and in accordance with astrological indicators, I encourage you to make a list of your own perfect things—and spend extra time communing with them in the coming weeks.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Jean-Michel Basquiat started his career as a graffiti artist. When he evolved into being a full-time painter, he incorporated words amidst his images. On many occasions, he'd draw lines through the words. Why? "I cross out words so you will see them more," he said. "The fact that they are obscured makes you want to read them." In the coming weeks, you might benefit from discreetly using this strategy in your own life. In other words, draw attention to the things you want to emphasize by downplaying them or being mysterious about them or suggesting they are secret. Reverse psychology can be an asset for you.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Because of the onslaught of the internet and social media, lots of people no longer read books. But in 2020, I highly recommend that you not be one of that crowd. In my astrological opinion, you need more of the slow, deep wisdom that comes from reading books. You will also benefit from other acts of rebellion against the Short Attention Span Era. Crucial blessings will flow in your direction as you honor the gradual, incremental approach to everything.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): "I love to be surprised by something I have never thought of," declares Capricorn actor Ralph Fiennes. According to my analysis of the astrological aspects, you'll be wise to make that one of your top mottos in 2020. Why? First, life is likely to bring to your attention a steady stream of things you've never imagined. And second, your ability to make good use of surprises will be at an all-time high. Here's further advice to help ensure that the vast majority of your surprises will be welcome, even fun: Set aside as many of your dogmas and expectations as possible, so that you can be abundantly receptive to things you've never thought of.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): "I love fools' experiments. I am always making them." So said one of the most famous and influential scientists who ever lived, Aquarian-born naturalist Charles Darwin. In accordance with upcoming astrological factors, I invite you to draw inspiration from his approach. Allow yourself to explore playfully as you conduct fun research. Just assume that you have a mandate to drum up educational experiences, and that a good way to do that is to amuse yourself with improvisational adventures.

♊ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): "How do you get your main pleasure in life?" That question was posed to Scorpio author Evelyn Waugh and Piscean social reformer William Beveridge. Waugh said, "I get mine spreading alarm and despondency." Beveridge said, "I get mine trying to leave the world a better place than I found it." I hope you will favor Beveridge's approach over Waugh's in 2020, Pisces—for two reasons. First, the world already has plenty of alarm and despondency; it doesn't need even a tiny bit more. Second, aspiring to be like Beveridge will be the best possible strategy for fostering your mental and physical health.

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4			5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12
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COURSE PREP

BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

- 1 Did some ground-breaking work?
- 5 Band with their own museum in Stockholm
- 9 Story with so many characters that it's hard to keep track of
- 13 "Duh, that was obvious"
- 15 Leerer, colloquially
- 16 Walked (upon)
- 17 Regular working stiff
- 18 Bad funk
- 19 All of everything
- 20 Headquarters for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- 23 Reason for a Tylenol
- 24 Ocho halved
- 28 "Yeah, [snort] right!"
- 33 Langston Hughes poem with the lines "Nobody'll dare / Say to me, / 'Eat in the kitchen,' / Then."
- 34 Bounding rhythm
- 35 Stat for Patrick Mahomes: Abbr.
- 36 Where birds go?
- 37 Off the hook
- 40 Pull a fast one
- 41 Certain sleeve makeup?
- 42 Cheers for Atlético Madrid
- 43 Fashion house name
- 44 Retro chic denim selection
- 49 Allows entry
- 50 Charges from Square or PayPal
- 51 When the most intense fighting occurs
- 57 Org. under the Department of Homeland Security
- 60 Norse trickster
- 61 Some Kia sedans

- 62 Loverboy with a quiver
- 63 Word for "residue" that's more commonly a plural
- 64 Kick out
- 65 "Start of a ____" (first clue in a themed puzzle that likely elicits a groan)
- 66 "Watch What Happens Live" host Cohen
- 67 Character in a metallic bikini
- Down
- 1 Area of concern for those looking to lose a few pounds
- 2 Southern stew veggie
- 3 Organic compound
- 4 Fresh Mexican Grill franchise
- 5 No longer sleeping
- 6 Alpine ski racer Miller
- 7 Voting group
- 8 Soft drink that, despite its name, is actually German
- 9 Patronize, as a campsite
- 10 Video installation, e.g.
- 11 Gunk
- 12 Wood-shaping device
- 14 Big name in grape juice
- 21 "Now it makes sense"
- 22 Little Ivy just outside of Boston
- 25 Punk rocker Zedek
- 26 Daily allowance
- 27 Playful critters
- 28 Befitting a son or daughter
- 29 Immediately
- 30 Withstood challenges
- 31 Lock horns (with)
- 32 "____ Heldenleben" (Strauss)

- 37 Singer a.k.a the Thin White Duke
- 38 Actor who hosts the "Clear+Vivid" podcast
- 39 Video game platform that had a Power Glove controller
- 43 Dutch visual movement that translates to "The Style"
- 45 Enharmonic equivalent to E-flat
- 46 Burning man?
- 47 Nebraska senator Fischer
- 48 Marilyn Monroe née Norma ____ Mortenson
- 52 Unable to decide
- 53 Approved
- 54 Feature of Vermont's and Maine's state flags
- 55 Central points
- 56 Spanish 101 verb
- 57 It's got all the answers: Abbr.
- 58 Down under bird
- 59 "Who? Little old me?"

Last Week's Answer

A	N	A		S	T	D	S		J	U	S	T	S	O
E	I	N		E	Y	R	E		O	N	A	H	O	P
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					G	A	Z	A			A	T	N	O
G	U	I	N	E	A	P	I	G	S		H	O	N	E
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L	I	T	T	E	R		S	A	S	H		E	S	E

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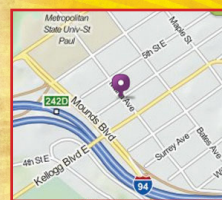
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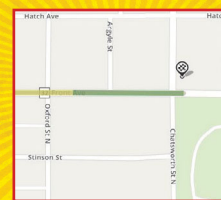
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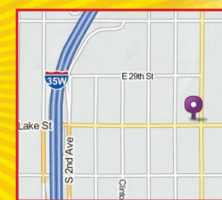
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Sub Space

Is my relationship just a stand-in for self-harm?

I'm a 26-year-old bisexual woman with a history of self-harm. It hasn't been much of an issue for the last few years, but my sex life has improved a lot in that time. I realized that I am quite submissive and masochistic, and I have found a wonderful Dominant partner who I've gotten to explore that kink with in a positive and healthy way. Last night, I watched the movie *Secretary*, and Maggie Gyllenhaal's character is someone who self-harms but stops when she begins a Dom/sub relationship with her boss. Obviously this film is flawed and not exactly a great guideline for healthy BDSM relationships. (The power dynamic! The lack of consent! That weird come scene!) However, I did find myself relating to her character, and am now questioning my motives for pursuing this kind of sexual relationship. I worry that I may be unintentionally using the pain that I lovingly experience from my partner as a replacement for the pain I used to experience from my bad habits. Or am I using BDSM as a form of harm reduction? Is it rational to even compare these two things?

SEEKING CAREFUL ADVICE REGARDING RECENT EMOTIONAL DISCOVERY

"I completely get where SCARRED is coming from," said Lina Dune, the creator of Ask a Sub (askasub.com). "You're discovering your kinks, and then the culture comes in with a not-entirely accurate film or hot take, and it can taint your self-discovery."

Dune is known as a "fairy submother" to her thousands of followers on Instagram, where she regularly posts about the D/s lifestyle and frequently highlights red flags that newbies to the kink scene may miss. (A Dom who insists he "doesn't negotiate" with subs? Run away.)

"There's a difference between self-harm and what SCARRED is doing with her Dom in a consensual, rational, measured environment with safe words in place," said Dune. "And it's telling that she didn't write in to say, 'Oh my god, I'm using D/s to self-harm!' Rather, she's worried she *might* be unintentionally or unknowingly engaging in some form of self-harm."

While the fictional character played by Maggie Gyllenhaal stops engaging in acts of self-harm after entering into a D/s relationship with the fictional character played by James Spader, SCARRED, you



Dan Savage

don't want to overinterpret that fictional narrative. While the film suggested there was a causal relationship between Gyllenhaal's character entering into a D/s relationship and no longer engaging in acts of self-harm, that doesn't mean the same is true for you.

"The culture infantilizes us all when it comes to owning our sexual desires—and that's especially the case for women," said Dune. "The message is: 'You don't know what you're getting into' or 'You don't realize the effect this is having.' But if there's one thing SCARRED is an expert on, it's herself. It's not like she's in a trance when she's with her Dom, which means she's consciously choosing this for herself, and it feels healthy and good. Our bodies don't usually lie. And I'd be willing to bet that self-harm did not feel that way."

But even if it turns out you're right—even if, worst-case scenario, joyful consensual kink in the context of an intimate connection with another person is somehow a replacement for solo acts of self-harm that isolated you—it could still be a good thing.

Dune suggests that you explore your feelings with a kink-positive therapist, and I want to second that. "From my perspective, it looks like SCARRED may have been manufacturing her own version of exposure therapy, which some somatic-based psychologists have suggested is exactly what negotiated, consent-based kink play can provide," said Dune. "For example, a person with a fear of being powerless may find it helpful to experiment with powerlessness in small, controlled doses in the context of a structured, negotiated BDSM situation. Looking a fear in the eye and then being able to back away from it at will and end with a cuddle and a check-in with your play partner can make you feel more powerful, not less. So if SCARRED can consciously work through this with a therapist and her Dom, this BDSM relationship has the potential to be very healing, just as long as she maintains her autonomy within it."

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